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ABSTRACT

This speech describes ongoing research by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education in Austin, Texas, on the role of the principal in the process of school improvement. Basic assumptions of the research are that change is a process, not an event, that change begins with individuals, and that it involves personal growth; hence, interventions must be related first to people, then to the innovation. Next, "stages of concern" are delineated: awareness, information, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing. The current research focuses on interventions by the principal, which have been classified into "game plan components": developing supportive organizational arrangements, providing training, consultation and reinforcement, monitoring and evaluation, increasing external communication, and disseminating. Principals are classified, by leadership style, as either initiators, managers, or responders. The types are described and correlated with their roles as change facilitators. Handouts include a list of "game plan components," a description of change facilitating styles, a list of findings related to the roles of the "second change facilitator" in school improvement, and a list of primary references. (TE)

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THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPAL STYLES ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Shirley M. Hord

Shirley Hord is Co-Director for the Research on the Improvement Process Program, R & D Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin. Hord and her colleagues at the Center have conducted a Principal-Teacher Interaction Study which has been awarded the best research study of administrators for 1983-84 by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The paper which reports the findings of this study is titled The Role of the School Principal in School Improvement Efforts. Hord's presentation reveals many of the findings from this important study.

Research on the Improvement Process is a project that has been studying the improvement process within schools--trying to understand how schools change, what the processes are for change, and what things have to happen in order for schools to change more effectively and more efficiently. We don't study what changes schools should make. That's for someone else to decide. But, when it has been determined that some change should be made and an improvement program has been selected, our research findings can help schools make that change.

Assumptions

Our research is based on several assumptions. First of all, change is a PROCESS, not an event. During the past 20 years, there has been an assumption that if a new program is delivered to a teacher neatly packaged and attractively laid out, it will be put into practice. We have learned over the years that change does not happen that way. It takes the input, the involvement, and the help of a great many people; it takes a substantial amount of time. Most teachers and principals understand this, but very few superintendents and boards of education do. Instead, superintendents and board members tend to pay attention to dollar signs; and

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since time costs money, their interest is in having schools improve as rapidly as possible. But we have learned that change is a process, and it is a very expensive endeavor in terms of time.

Secondly, change is a very INDIVIDUAL endeavor. It is made by individuals first--then by institutions. We are interested in how individuals get involved and in what ways they change across time. The next assumption is related; change is a highly PERSONAL experience. For example, you may change much more rapidly than I. It may take me a long time to understand the new program or process. My needs might be very different from yours because you are moving along more quickly in understanding the change. The fourth assumption is that change involves developmental GROWTH. People who are changing develop and grow in terms of their feelings about change and in terms of their skills in applying it.

The outcome of all of these assumptions is: interventions must be related to the people first, and the innovation second. We think that whatever you do should be done with the individual teachers in mind, rather than with the new program, or innovation, as a focus. That's not to say the program is not important--but if you push to get the program in place, then you may leave your people behind.

Teachers Concerns

One way to keep people in mind is through their stages of concern as they are involved with the change process. We have learned, over a number of studies, that when you introduce a change, people have particular reactions. (See Figure 1, Stages of Concern.) Starting at the bottom of the chart, we see that when people don't really know about a change, they have

Figure 1

Stages of Concern:
Typical Expressions of Concern about the Innovation

	Stages of Concern		Expressions of Concern
IMPACT	6	Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5	Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4	Consequence	How is my use affecting kids?
TASK	3	Management	I seem to be spending all my time in getting material ready.
SELF	2	Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1	Informational	I would like to know more about it.
	0	Awareness	I am not concerned about it (the innovation.)

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what we call Stage of Concern zero (SoC 0). They don't know about it. They are unconcerned about it.

When people first hear something about an innovation, they tend to have informational concerns (SoC 1). They want to know more about this new school effectiveness project that is going to be implemented. Coupled with that, they are also saying, "What does that mean to me?" They have personal concerns (SoC 2). For example, "If I get involved in a basic skills program, will I like it?" "What is it going to mean to me as a person, as a professional?"

After those early concerns are resolved by becoming more familiar and understanding the change to be implemented, concerns change to management (SoC 3). This happens when teachers begin to change their practice and to use a new program or a new process. Whatever it is--if it's a new behavior management process or if it's a new science program--when people begin using a new program, they have a lot of concerns about how they are going to make it work. Examples are "Where do I get the time?" "How much preparation is it going to take?" "How do I work it into my busy schedule?"

If things go well, if it's a good program being implemented, if teachers have the time that they need, and get the help they need, then they can move to consequence concerns (SoC 4). This does not happen easily or quickly. Many teachers never move beyond their management concerns, because we don't know enough about implementation to help them sufficiently. If teachers are concerned about management on a daily basis, they will either modify the program or they will drop it entirely.

Sometimes teachers move to what we call collaboration concerns (SoC 5) which involves working in coordination with another person. Some teachers never have collaboration concerns; they want to work in their own self-contained classrooms and are not interested in being engaged with others.

The last stage of concern (SoC 6) is what we call refocusing. This involves looking about for some other programs that will work even better. Some refocusing people have developed their own programs.

Looking Farther

As we have studied change, we have been very involved with teachers. We were led to the study of principals through some implementation work with teachers that we did in one of the western states. A very large school district wanted to implement a new science program. They had developed a program they were very pleased with, but they didn't know how to implement it. They came to us and suggested that if we would help them, then they could implement it more successfully and we could study the process.

We studied a sample of twenty schools in that district. After two years of implementing the new science program, nine schools were looked at more intensely; they appeared different in terms of how their teachers were feeling and behaving. Three of the nine schools had teachers with high management concerns. Another two of the schools had teachers with high consequence concerns. Four of the schools had concerns that were flat; the teachers weren't strongly concerned one way or the other.

All of these schools had the same resources, the same program, the same amount of time, and the same input--and yet we found large

differences. We wondered why that was, and so we started questioning to try to find out why these schools were different. We tested out all of our speculations. Is it the SES of the school? Is it the age of the building? Is it the age of the teachers? Is it the training of the teachers? Is it the principal? And as a result of talking with everybody, we determined that it probably was the principal. We hypothesized that what happens in school improvement efforts and the degree to which school improvement is implemented is related to the principal. That gave us our cornerstone for beginning to study principals.

Principals' Interventions

We have learned that many interventions are supplied by principals and others during a school improvement change process. Our definition of intervention is an action that will influence the use of a new program or innovation (whatever it may be). Interventions are things you do to make something happen--in this case, things you do to help teachers implement a new program.

There are several ways to look at interventions. One of these is what we call Game Plan Components (GPCs). (See Appendix B.) When you implement a school improvement effort, it is helpful to think about these GPCs and determine what you're going to do under each area. The first one is developing supportive organizational arrangements, which has to do with bringing in the materials, hiring staff, and providing the space. Providing for supplies and materials is a very important GPC and an important function that principals attend to.

GPC 2 is called training. Typically, in the schools we have studied, principals have not done much training. An agency like AEL does some

training and staff development. In large districts, curriculum coordinators may do training. If there is a state education agency, they may supply some training. Even though principals don't usually do the training, it is an important GPC in school improvement efforts.

The next GPC is providing consultation and reinforcement. It's the same thing as "coaching." It means follow-up after the training to find out if teachers really understand and to identify what kinds of help are required. This GPC is what really makes or does not make an implementation effort. Principals are frequently engaged in this area, especially in the schools where teachers had moved into consequence concerns.

GPC 4 is monitoring and evaluation. By that we mean finding out how it is going, what is needed, and what is not clear. It also involves more formalized evaluation. Monitoring an implementation effort is a required intervention. You can't help people and you can't deliver interventions that are very appropriate for them if you don't know what is needed.

The last two components are external communication and dissemination. We did not find much activity in these areas. Some examples would be reporting to the board of education or to the PTA, or disseminating information to other districts.

If you are a principal thinking about change, you need to attend to these six areas. The first four are the most important. If you neglect any one of those, you may not get your program implemented in the way that you would like.

Question: In your experience in schools, have you found that the external communication (GPC 5) was not necessarily essential?

Hord: Thank you for asking that. No, I would not say that. I think it's very important. It's something that does not need as frequent or as regular attention as the first four. It appears that after you've reported to parents and they seem to be supportive and satisfied, then you can turn your attention to other things. The first four components are things that regularly need some attention.

Question: I just wondered if maybe that's an activity that might be employed more at the central office than at the school level.

Hord: That's possible, although I would guess that the school level people have an obligation to keep their constituency informed about what's going on. I expect that the other side of the coin is we probably have not done enough of that and one of the reasons we may now be in the dilemma that we're in with our constituency, is that we have not let our public know about the good things that are happening in the schools.

Having described a "change" setting in which teachers' concerns can change over time regarding something that a principal or a school district introduces, and having talked about implementing school improvement in terms of essential interventions, let's look now at the principal.

We speculated that the principal was important. We read in the literature that principals are the gate keepers to change, and that they can really make or break an effort. But there was not much information available that identified the day-to-day behaviors which make an implementation effort successful. So we decided to study that.

We asked three school districts across the country--one in the east, one in the west, and one in the Rockies--to let us study three of their elementary schools. We asked each school district to identify three schools with three kinds of principals. In essence, we asked for a management-concerned school type principal, a consequence-concerned school type principal, and one that was not very strong either way. At

that time we didn't have names for these principal types. We had some descriptors and the districts were able to identify principals of each type.

We spent a year looking at what was happening in one slice of the life of a school. We weren't looking at the principal in all domains. We were looking essentially at what the principal and others were doing to facilitate the implementation of a particular school improvement effort. One school district was in its first year of implementing an expository writing program. On the east coast, the three schools were in the second year of implementing a new objective-referenced math program. The third school district was in it's third year of implementing a new science program.

We were in the schools four times during that year to talk with principals, district level people, assistant principals, and every teacher. We telephoned the principal every other week. On the off week we telephoned a second person in the school. We were very lucky to have principals who were interested in our being there and who were cooperative. As a result of all of that data collection, we picked up 1,855 incident interventions. Interestingly enough, in the year one schools, people delivered 517 interventions; in the year two schools, they delivered 684; and people in the year three schools delivered 654. The data seem to say that you don't slow down in helping teachers at year two or year three. You keep on going. Another interesting result is to look at a breakdown on the Game Plan Components. In GPC 1 there were 660 interventions. In GPC 2 (training), there were 128. This is a much lower number, however I suspect that the training may have been a longer

and more involved intervention, so it might have been more powerful. In GPC 3, there were 448 interventions; and in monitoring and evaluation, GPC 4, there were 416. What we're trying to suggest here is that it's more than just "delivering the box." It is more than providing in-service for the first three days of school in August. It goes on across several years.

Another way to look at the interventions was to look at their source: Who was doing them? Lots of people were involved in doing interventions: teachers, district level curriculum people, principals, assistant principals, and special resource teachers. Of 1,855 interventions to support these implementation efforts, 583 were by principals. That's about one-third. So it's clear that principals are very important and that principals do things. These findings reinforced the notion that the principal is very important.

We found that assistant principals and other facilitators accounted for another one-third of the interventions. The rest of the interventions were by teachers, associate superintendents, newspapers, parents, and others.

When interventions are delivered, they go to somebody for a reason. We typically think of teachers being the only targets of an intervention because they're the ones who are supposed to implement a new program. We learned that principals receive interventions also. Teachers receive the largest number of interventions, but 256 of these interventions were delivered to the principal by teachers and by district staff.

Styles

After having collected the data, we tried to interpret and understand it. In so doing, we learned that there are different ways that principals go about doing things. This we call "style." There are three different styles we have called the initiator, the manager, and the responder. In general terms, the initiator makes it happen, the manager helps it happen, and the responder lets it happen. (See Appendix B for a description of principal styles.) Let me be very quick to add that in all the schools we were studying, the principals were doing a very satisfactory job.

When we looked at outcomes, we found that initiators and managers were more successful in implementation. Programs were better implemented (in a more correct or more appropriate way according to the school district's idea of curriculum progress) in classrooms within schools where there were initiators and managers present. We looked at principals in terms of vision and goal setting. Another way we looked at principals focused on what they did to structure the school as a workplace, and how they managed change. Still another dimension related to how principals made decisions. Lastly, we looked at what they did to guide and support the faculty in their efforts.

Let's look for a few minutes now at these three different types of principals. The first is the responder who lets it happen. The responder principals receive a lot of interventions from the central office. They get a lot of push coming from the central office because the responder principal does not supply that push within the building. The responder principal expresses very few ideas about the school and how it might be different in the future. We learned that responder principals are very concerned about the perceptions and the perspectives of other people. In terms of what goes

on in the school, they let others take the lead. They delay decisions and they get all kinds of input on decisions. Decisions are generally made one at a time instead of in coordination with other decisions that have impact on each other. And once a decision is made, it is fairly fixed and not subject to reversal. It appears also that the responders, because they're very concerned about other people and keeping people happy, are more often found in their offices. When you need something from them, you go to them.

Question: Do you in actuality find that people are blends of these or are you finding that they have a pattern?

Hord: That's a good question. We have found that the responders tend to be pretty consistent as responders. Initiators too are pretty consistent. We find that the managers seem to swing back and forth, sometimes being responders and sometimes initiators.

Participant: One thing it seems to say is that as you try to initiate change or encourage change in local school systems, you would deal with responders differently than you would deal with either of the other two groups.

Hord: Exactly. What it says to superintendents, I think, is that principals, like teachers, are different. They have to have support to implement programs in their buildings, and they need training for new programs, but they need different kinds of support.

Managers--what do they do and how are they different? An interesting and fairly significant factor about managers is that they are highly protective of their staff. We all know that teachers are being asked to do an incredible number of things; they are being asked to implement, implement, implement, and implement. One of the reasons for this is that many people think it takes only one year to implement a new program. So we are at fault when we ask them to do all of these things. But managers tend to protect their teachers and say, "My teachers are already overworked--come back and see me next year." That's different from the initiator who says, "Hey, that

program makes excellent sense for my kids--we'll do it." Managers are efficient; they see that the school runs well, things are there, and schedules are in order.

They cushion changes at the beginning and they modify the extent to which they implement new programs. Once they get under way with a new change effort, managers implement quickly and efficiently. Sometimes the implementation is at a lower level than the district office or the curriculum people might wish it to be.

Another very interesting thing we found out about manager principals is they're trying to do more of it themselves. We will not have time today to talk much about "the second change facilitator (CF)." This is a person in every building who turns out to be very important in helping to implement a new program. One of the interesting differences between initiators, managers, and responders is in their use of a second CF. The manager intervenes more often, and the second CF less often in the manager principal schools. For some reason, managers want to do it all to see that it is done right and done well.

You might guess that in responder schools the principal intervenes less than the second CF. It would probably make sense to you, given the description of these persons. In the initiator-led schools, it is almost half and half. The initiator principal looks at the whole area or territory involved in what needs to be done. He or she brings in a second CF and sometimes a third, determines what is to be done, and then shares those activities.

So, let's look at the initiator. When you go to their schools, you hear a lot about kids, and you hear a lot about programs and what they will

do for students. You get the idea that they know where they're going. They can articulate the kind of school they need. They have a clear vision. They get input and they listen. There is not as much participant decision-making. In the 1960's we had a lot of humanistic work going on and there was a strong push for participant decisionmaking. That's not to say such shared decisionmaking is good or bad, but simply that in the initiator school, there is less of it.

One of the things that characterizes these people more than anything else is push. They don't wait for it to happen; they're in there making it happen and they push teachers. They want things done and done well. They are focused on the achievement and happiness of their students. One of the five factors researchers have found present in effective schools is strong leadership at the school level.

One of the things that effective principals do is push in order that kids will learn more and they push not only on the teachers, but also on the kids, on themselves, and on the parents. They have high expectations that they clearly articulate. They are people who are informed, know what's available, what can be done, and what the options are. They are people who get out there and agressively seek resources. They are people who might "creatively reinterpret" district policies to get things done.

Question: What is the job role of the second change facilitator?

Hord: At the school level, this person can be the assistant principal, a resource teacher, or a teacher whose role is to help facilitate this new program. It can be what's called an innovation facilitator. This second CF can also come from the district level. In our data we found that in initiator schools and in manager schools, the second CF was a school level person; in the responder-led schools, it was a district level person, such as the subject specialist or curriculum coordinator.

Let me report a couple of the key findings about the second change facilitator. (See Appendix B.) The second CF does more of what we call complex incidents: the coaching, the follow-up, the consultation. They have longer interactions with teachers around more substantive issues, such as "how can I help you?" and "this is the way it should work." There is a relationship between the principal's style and the second CF role in terms of who does more and who does less. There's also a relationship between where the second CF is housed and the style of the principal. The initiators and managers have in-house, in-school second CF's. The responder has someone from outside the school. And sometimes there is yet another teacher who acts as a third CF, who is a little more informal and who works teacher to teacher, models how the innovation should work, disseminates information, and such. So, there may be a number of actors in the schools who are helping teachers change their practice through school improvement efforts to make their schools more effective.

HANDOUTS

Game Plan Components

A Game Plan Component (GPC) is a manageable part of the game plan. The combination of several strategies and tactics with a similar focus comprise a game plan component.

GPC 1 Developing Supportive Organizational Arrangements

Actions taken to develop policies, plan, manage, staff, fund, restructure roles, and provide space, materials, and resources to establish and maintain use of the innovation.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) provisioning--providing space, equipment, resource materials, etc.
2) hiring new staff
3) seeking/receiving funding

GPC 2 Training

Actions taken to develop positive attitudes, knowledge and skills in relation to use of the innovation through formal, structured, and/or pre-planned activities.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) workshops
2) modeling use of the innovation
3) critique sessions with users around a pre-specified task

GPC 3 Providing Consultation and Reinforcement

Actions taken to encourage use and to assist individuals in solving problems related to the implementation of the innovation. Often, these actions are idiosyncratic, problem-specific, and targeted at an individual or small group of individuals.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) "comfort and caring" sessions
2) administrator advocacy and support for use of the innovation
3) problem-solving group
4) peer-support group

Hord, S. M. & Loucks, S. F. A concerns-based model for the delivery of inservice. Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas, 1980.

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GPC 4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Actions taken to gather, analyze, or report data about the implementation and outcomes of a change effort.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) end-of-workshop questionnaire
2) pre-post analysis of learner outcomes
3) periodic assessment of concerns, use of configuration
4) administrators' conferences with teachers to assess how the project is going

GPC 5 External Communication

Actions taken to inform and/or gain the support of individuals or groups external to the users.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) public relations campaign
2) training parents/community members
3) presentation at conferences
4) reports to the Board of Education

GPC 6 Dissemination

Actions taken to broadcast innovation information and materials to encourage others to adopt the innovation.

Examples of related strategies/tactics:

1) regular mailing of descriptive brochures to potential adopters
2) making charge free demonstration kits available
3) training and providing regional innovation representatives
4) presenting the innovation at administrator conferences

Hord, S. M. & Loucks, S. F. A concerns-based model for the delivery of inservice. Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas, 1980.

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Change facilitating styles of principals make a difference.

Initiators have clear, decisive long-range policies and goals that transcend but include implementation of the current innovation. They tend to have very strong beliefs about what good schools and teaching should be like and work intensely to attain this vision. Decisions are made in relation to their goals for the school and in terms of what they believe to be best for students, which is based on current knowledge of classroom practice. Initiators have strong expectations for students, teachers and themselves. They convey and monitor these expectations through frequent contacts with teachers and clear explication of how the school is to operate and how teachers are to teach. When they feel it is in the best interest of their school, particularly the students, Initiators will seek changes in district programs or policies or they will reinterpret them to suit the needs of the school. Initiators will be adamant but not unkind, they solicit input from staff and then decisions are made in terms of the goals of the school, even if some are ruffled by their directness and high expectations.

Managers represent a broader range of behaviors. They demonstrate both responsive behaviors in answer to situations or people and they also initiate actions in support of the change effort. The variations in their behavior seem to be linked to their rapport with teachers and central office staff as well as how well they understand and buy into a particular change effort. Managers work without fanfare to provide basic support to facilitate teachers' use of an innovation. They keep teachers informed about decisions and are sensitive to teacher needs. They will defend their teachers from what are perceived as excessive demands. When they learn that the central office wants something to happen in their school they then become very involved with their teachers in making it happen. Yet, they do not typically initiate attempts to move beyond the basics of what is imposed.

Responders place heavy emphasis on allowing teachers and others the opportunity to take the lead. They believe their primary role is to maintain a smooth running school by focusing on traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content and treating students well. They view teachers as strong professionals who are able to carry out their instructional role with little guidance. Responders emphasize the personal side of their relationships with teachers and others. Before they make decisions they often give everyone an opportunity to have input so as to weigh their feelings or to allow others to make the decision. A related characteristic is the tendency toward making decisions in terms of immediate circumstances rather than in terms of longer range instructional or school goals. This seems to be due in part to their desire to please others and in part to their more limited vision of how their school and staff should change in the future.

Hall, G. E., Rutherford, W. L., Hord, S. M. & Huling, L. L. Effects of three principal styles on school improvement. Educational Leadership, 1984, 41(5), 22-29.

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The Second Change Facilitator is a significant person in school improvement efforts.

Figure A

Findings Related to the Roles of Facilitators in School Improvement

-----The Second CF's role may be filled by a variety of persons: an assistant principal, an appointed teacher from within the school, district level specialists or curriculum coordinators.

-----There is a division of change facilitating tasks between the Principal and the Second CF: Principals provide planning, guidance, reinforcement, and supervision directed to the individual teachers and teacher groups, while the Second CF does more training and problem solving work with individual teachers.

-----Second CFs' interventions on teachers are generally more complex, or contain multiple actions. This is reflected in training activities and frequent consultation with individual teachers about their progress.

-----The Second CF is more frequently interactive whereas the Principal's interventions are more frequently one-way.

-----The Principal's change facilitator style has a systematic relationship to the Second CF's role in a complementary way:

- Manager led schools showed half the number of interventions by the Second CF as the Principal (Managers try to do it all themselves).
- Responder led schools showed the Second CF doing more than the Principal (Responders allow others to do it).
- Initiator led schools showed the Second CF doing approximately the same number of interventions as the Principal (Initiators delegate and share resporsibility for tasks).

-----The Principal's change facilitator style influenced the location of the Second CF:

- Initiators and Managers organized and utilized their own staff, or district staff available to them, to work within the school to facilitate implementation.
- Responders often waited for someone in the central office to initiate and keep the change effort going, thus the Second CF would likely be based outside the school.

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